

THE

US ISSN 0010-1443

COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

P.O.Box 4411

Huntsville, Alabama 35802

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Volume 13, No. 4

December, 1974

Serial No. 42

ODD and CURIOUS

CONNECTICUT MOS SPECIMENS



A CONNECTICUT "WALKING LIBERTY"

Sequential page 460

ODD and CURIOUS

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Connecticut MOS Specimens

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J.C.Spilman

We are presenting in this article a group of photographs of a number of very unusual specimens produced by the coiners of the Connecticut Coppers. These specimens are all Multiple Offset Strikes (MOS) and the majority appear to have been produced by the coinage press operator as a whim of fancy. The first group of specimens published and designated as MOS were a group of Fugio Cents of 1787 (CNL, May 1971, pages 320-327). In that article we discussed the MOS phenomena, categorized five general types and illustrated a number of examples. For convenience the categories of MOS Types are repeated on page 463 of this issue.

The illustrations of MOS specimens from the Connecticut series of early American coinages which are presented here have been selected from a considerable number of specimens and photographs accumulated over the years by our Patron Edward R. Barnsley. We are especially grateful to Ned for his permission to illustrate and discuss these Odd and Curious specimens from the presses of the Connecticut coiners.

Among these specimens are several configurations not previously discussed or illustrated. All, however, fit within the five general categories for MOS. Included are two examples where the initial strike was offset and the subsequent strike was centered -- a triple reverse which exhibits a single obverse -- a flipped MOS where obverse and reverse designs appear on both sides of the specimen -- and a number of other unusual features.

It is essential in any discussion of MOS specimens to speak of the individual strikings that occurred and to identify the specific features associated with the first strike, second strike, third strike, and so on. The manufacture of a MOS was a multi-step process and positive identification of each feature relative to striking sequence is necessary to establish an understanding of what actually occurred during each step. This is often difficult and generally cannot be accomplished by the use of photographs -- it is usually necessary that the specimen itself be at hand in order to make observations of slight differences in planchet thickness, edge effects and variations in slope and elevations of various features of the composite design. The results of offset overstriking are very often not what would be generally anticipated; accordingly, in the following discussions of individual specimens the process of manufacture is described in terms of striking sequence, and where unusual or unexpected effects occurred, these confusion-factors are identified in an effort to give a better visualization of cause and effect.

As an additional aid in visualization, the obverse and reverse photographs are

arranged vertically, one above the other, rather than in the more usual side by side configuration. This provides two important advantages: (1) the obverse and reverse sides of the coin appear in the upright manner in which they are normally viewed during examination, and (2) the relative positions of planchet deformation on opposite sides of the specimen, resulting from the offset striking, are more readily recognized since these features now appear in vertical relationship directly above and below each other. More simply stated, the photographs are oriented as though the specimens were merely rotated about their horizontal axis. Where the reverse design may be rotated from the normal 180° relationship, the degree of rotation can be quickly visualized in this relationship.

Once these geometric relationships are well in mind an individual will have little difficulty in making rapid and accurate mental comparisons while examining a MOS, especially when the additional complexity of visualizing the effects caused by normal, brockage or offset backing pieces are taken into account. This technique permits one to develop a sort of dies-eye view of a MOS specimen; it is a way of thinking not usually required in numismatic examinations.

All in all, when the relative physical placement of MOS and the various backing pieces are taken into account and considered in terms of striking sequence and other appropriate factors, it quickly becomes apparent that the majority of the MOS specimens illustrated here must have been intentionally produced rather than being the result of a coinage accident. We can even speculate that some of these specimens may have been produced in a competitive spirit to determine which coiner could manufacture the most unusual design!

We trust that our Patrons will find these Connecticut MOS specimens to be of interest and we ask that similar specimens that each of you may discover be forwarded to CNL for examination and photography. Even though the majority of MOS specimens are found within the Fugio and Connecticut series and consist of varieties believed to have been manufactured by the same coiners, they are also known in the New Jersey and Vermont coinages and will probably be uncovered in other series as well.

All photographs on the following pages are enlarged approximately two diameters.



MOS CATEGORIES

- MOS Type A** Specimen struck in the normal manner, then offset in the dies and struck again. Strike areas match on each side. (Since no backing piece was used there is no Type AA).
- MOS Type B** Similar to Type A except a blank planchet was in place on the dies when the offset strike was accomplished. Second strike areas match on each side. Original pattern flattened on back side where blank planchet was driven into first strike area.
- MOS Type BB** The backing piece from a MOS Type B strike. Top side is offset brockage, opposite side may resemble normal strike but weakly struck on portions. Second strike areas appear not to match on each side.
- MOS Type C** Similar to Type A except a fully struck coin was in place on the die when the second strike was accomplished. Backside second strike area is brockage rather than flattened as in Type B.
- MOS Type CC** The backing piece from a Type C strike. Top side is offset brockage over fully struck coin, opposite side may resemble normal strike or have slightly double struck appearance near one edge. Second strike areas appear not to match on each side.

To qualify as MOS, the strikes must be offset at least 10% of total diameter.

Editor's note: These categories were originally developed based on the Fugio specimens that had been examined at the time. Most of the backing pieces which had been examined had been used in a manner so that they were fully centered on the die at the moment of the second strike, and the descriptions of backing pieces given in the above categories carry the implication that they must be so positioned, and this was NOT the intention. In the case of the Connecticuts illustrated and discussed in the present article there are a number of backing pieces used in such a manner (not centered on the die) that it would be difficult to say with certainty which of the two specimens should be designated as the backing piece and carry the double designator BB or CC.

SPECIMEN #1



A Connecticut "Walking Liberty"
33.7-r.2 of 1787

MOS Type C --- Triple Struck

First strike -- Normal & well centered.

Second strike -- about 5% offset from the first strike and rotated approximately 10° clockwise (determined from denticle pattern).



Third strike -- This strike produced the Type C MOS. The reverse was centered on the die but rotated about 90° from the previous orientation. The obverse is reverse brockage about 60% offset. The specimen used as a backing piece and which produced the reverse brockage was also an r.2 of 1787; visible within the brockage area are the head and hair bun followed in proper sequence by the die break, cinquefoil and liberty staff.

The greatest confusion-factor on this specimen is the fact that the reverse was fully centered on the die during the third strike, but - the offset position of the backing piece caused pressure during the strike that produced only a partial impression from the reverse die. It can be visualized, therefore, that by proper positioning of a backing piece the coiner could produce any sort of composite impression from any location and position of the desired section of a die.

This specimen, by definition, did not become a MOS until the third strike. Had the process stopped after the second strike the specimen would not have met the 10% offset rule and would have been classified simply as a double struck piece. For our Patrons with sufficient curiosity it should be possible for them to construct a sketch of the appearance of the backing piece, keeping in mind the relative positions of the dies and specimen at the moment of the third strike. On consideration one can see that in this instance it would be most difficult to state for certain which of the two specimens should be designated as the backing piece!

SPECIMEN #2

Single Obverse with Triple Struck Reverse
33.3-W.1 of 1787

MOS Type B



First strike -- Normal and well centered.

Second strike -- A blank planchet was placed fully over the obverse of the specimen, then this assembly of coin and blank planchet were placed between the dies approximately 30% offset with no relative rotation from first strike.



Third strike -- Another, fresh, blank planchet was placed over the obverse of the specimen, the assembly placed between the dies as for the second strike, but this time offset approximately 85%.

Perhaps we should have named this one the "Triple Whammy" but after having some fun with the "Walking Liberty" on the previous page ye Editor decided that once was enough! Close visual examination of the edges and thickness of this specimen as well as the flattening of the obverse features indicates precisely the manner by which this specimen was produced. There is distinct progressive flattening of the obverse features from the second to third strike together with a noticable additional thinning of the planchet each time; however, these features are of such small magnitude that careful observation was necessary to determine that this was, in fact, the case. This is the sort of determination that could not be accomplished from a photograph alone.

Unfortunately this specimen was subsequently holed from reverse to obverse. The shape suggests the use of the shank of a file. This puncture was then hammered back down on the obverse side and the delaminating fracture that appears on both sides of the specimen appears to have resulted from the hammering and not from the third strike.

SPECIMEN #3

Reverse Order MOS
32.2-X.1 of 1787

MOS Type A

First strike -- 30% offset .

Second strike -- Normal and well centered.



Unlike most MOS specimens, the first strike on this one was the offset strike, and the second strike was the normal and well centered strike - thus its designation as "reverse order" MOS. In this instance, had the coinage press been able to apply sufficient pressure, the first impression - the offset impression - would have totally vanished leaving only the very slightest traces of its existence. There are two circumstances that most probably account for the remaining bold evidence of the initial strike. The first is a common characteristic of this series of Connecticut dies - the rather high relief of the central effigy on each of the opposing dies - resulting in a need for a significant flow of metal in toward the center during striking so as to fill the somewhat excessive cavity at the center. The second is that it is likely that this particular specimen had not been annealed following the first strike and went back into the press in its work hardened state which severely impeded the metal flow in the central areas with the result that there was very little distortion of the first strike lettering and date elements.

SPECIMEN #4



Reverse Order Brockage MOS
30-hh. 1 of 1787

MOS Type C

First strike -- Planchet centered on reverse die, fully struck coin offset 50% produced reverse brockage. Striking pressure appears to have been relatively light.



Second strike -- Reverse remained centered on die as during first strike, and both obverse and reverse received full striking force.

This specimen is very similar to specimen #3 in that the first strike was offset and the second was the normal well centered strike, and - further - the elements of lettering in the central area were not obliterated for the same reasons. The differences being, of course, that the central lettering is incuse rather than raised and appeared only on one rather than both sides of the specimen. Since in this case the backing piece was a fully struck coin the specimen becomes a Type C MOS where Specimen #3, having no backing piece, was designated as a Type A.

The appearance of the other specimen, the backing piece, can be rather easily visualized in this case, and here again it would be difficult to establish for certain which of the two specimens should be designated as the backing piece and thus called a MOS Type CC.

SPECIMEN # 5

A Two-faced MOS
16.4-L.2 of 1788

MOS Type ?



First strike -- Planchet fully centered on obverse die. The backing piece was a fully struck coin which was itself struck badly off center and was placed 50% offset during the strike. (Left side)



Second strike -- Specimen placed 50% offset between dies. (Right side)

This is one of the most unusual MOS specimens encountered to date. We just could not resist calling it a "two-faced" MOS. Here again is an example of half of a die impression produced even though the obverse die was fully covered by a planchet, exactly as was the case with Specimen #1. The positioning of the backing piece 50 % offset produced the proper pressures to generate the obverse effigy on the left side of this specimen. For the second strike the specimen was simply moved over between the dies and the right hand obverse was added. Note that no backing piece was necessary at this point because of the die and image relationships and that the reverse die was upset (rotated 180°) in the press.

The confusion-factor in this specimen is the strange nature of the backing piece used during the first strike. Note the incuse and reversed letters UC that appear on the left hand "blanked" reverse adjacent to the rim impression indicating the badly offcenter nature of this backing piece.

We could say that the left side of this specimen makes it a Type C MOS, but the the right side would denote it as a Type A MOS. Here we have a specimen on which the resultant images do not overlap at any point, so we are somewhat at a loss as to how it should best be designated!

SPECIMEN #6

A Flipped MOS
31.1-gg.1 of 1787

MOS Type B



First strike -- Normal & well centered.

Second strike -- Coin turned over between dies so obverse of coin facing reverse die, etc. Obverse centered on reverse die-- blank planchet placed 50% offset between reverse of coin and obverse die.



Once again we see a partial image controlled by placement of the backing piece even though the specimen was positioned fully covering the die face. While all MOS specimens are very rare, the flipped or turned over pieces such as this are especially so. Only three flipped specimens are known to the Editor, and all are Connecticut. Now doubt more exist in this and other series and we hope that more of them will be brought to light in the future.

Especially evident on this specimen is the planchet deformation associated with the second, offset, strike and the partial obliteration caused by a blank backing piece. The degree of mutual damage during the second strike can be evaluated in terms of relative hardness -- the work hardened first strike specimen vs. the softer, probably annealed, blank planchet -- in a striking situation where the normal press pressure was probably about double normal against half the usual area of planchet. The mutual damage is noticeably different where two fully struck coins were in the press as in the MOS Type C situation.

SPECIMEN #7

8-O of 1787

MOS Type A



First strike -- normal & well centered.

Second strike -- 45% offset.



As the final specimen in this group of Connecticut MOS specimens we are illustrating a relatively simple and uncomplicated MOS Type A. The only notable feature here is the variety itself - the unusual Obverse 8 of 1787. The obverse photograph illustrates the substantial recutting of the lower portions of the central effigy which resulted in a Mailed Bust Left die. This die was used to produce coinage tightly die-interlocked with thirteen Draped Bust Left varieties. (See CNL, September 1974, page 451 -- Connecticut Coppers, 346 Combinations of 404 Dies; Group 11).

The preliminary conclusion regarding this anomaly of die-interlocking, based on the Editor's film-print studies of the Connecticut series, is that this Mailed Bust obverse is a recutting of a die sunk from a Draped Bust Left hub! There is no conclusive evidence within the central effigy that supports this conclusion; this evidence appears in the border pattern and requires a recognition of the nature of Abel Buell's hubs of 1787! Buell's hubs for the year 1787 were not simple central effigy puncheons but consisted instead - for both his Fugio and Connecticut designs - of the complete border pattern surrounding the central design. Legend lettering, ornamentation and privy-marks were added later on individual dies.

Letters*TECHNICAL NOTES & The Research Forum*

- ● MORE on "PROFESSOR" DANIEL E. GROUX (RF-54B)
from Raymond H. Williamson; Lynchburg, Virginia

In Mr. Adams' remarks on Daniel E. Groux's 1856 prospectus for his proposed work "Numismatical History of the United States" (CNL, June 1974, p.441) he speculates that he is "inclined to doubt its existence." The book Numisgraphics by E. J. Attinelli (1876) contains a chronology of early coin auctions, and an alphabetical listing of early numismatic authors. For Groux's 1856 prospectus, he states: "The work was never issued." This quite well confirms John Adams' speculation.



- ● THOMAS MACHIN and the CAPE COD CANAL (TN-44A)
from Kenneth E. Bressett; Racine, Wisconsin

Mr. Howe's quote from "Boston Looks Seaward" (CNL, June 1974, p. 444) was indeed interesting. I wonder how many readers noticed the reference to Samuel Sewall and remembered that it was he who married John Hull's daughter Hannah in 1675 and received the fabled dowry of Pine Tree Shillings.



- ● CONNECTICUT COPPERS: CENTS: PENNIES (RF-43E)
from Edward R. Barnsley

The various comments which have been submitted on the above subject have been most interesting, and they illustrate the value of different collectors sharing with one another the results of their individual research on a particular subject. In the last issue (CNL, September 1974, p. 456) I mentioned that Dr. Wroth, the author of Abel Buell of Connecticut referred to the AUCTORI CONNEC's as "pennies"; in fact, he did so seven times and never once called them either "coppers" or "cents". My question now is, -- When were our our large, copper tokens and coins, the size of U.S. Mint cents, 1793-1857, first called "pennies"?

It is probable that our first token, so named after the British copper coin of the same size, was the uniface Albany Church Token bearing the inscription "Church Penny". The Massachusetts Historical Society specimen of this 1790 token was illustrated in the very first issue of The Colonial Newsletter, in October, 1960. Don Taxay's Comprehensive Catalogue, p.22, plate 259, states that 1,000 of these coppers were authorized on January 4, 1790 by the Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church of Albany, New York. Did this action result, therefore, in the earliest known American use of the word "penny"?

A PENNY SAVED IS A PENNY EARNED

(RF-43F)

● ● from Poor Richard; remarks by ye Editor

In recent issues of CNL there has been considerable discussion of the origins and usage of the terms "coppers", "cents" and - now - "pennies". Dr. Wroth's use of the term "Connecticut Pennies" was mentioned by Edward R. Barnsley (CNL, September 1974, p. 456) and seemed to carry the implication that this usage was incorrect. So far as ye Editor has been able to determine, Dr. Wroth is the only person to have so categorized the copper coinage of Connecticut, and we might excuse him this transgression on the basis that he was not a numismatist.

Dr. Wroth's usage of the term "pennies" would have been from a historical rather than a numismatic frame of mind. He would certainly have had knowledge of the very famous writings of Benjamin Franklin: "A penny saved is a penny earned" as in Poor Richard, and later restated by Franklin as "A penny saved is a penny got" in his letter of 2 October 1779 to Edward Bridgen on the subject of a copper coinage for the United States. (This letter appears on page 3 of the September 1965 issue of CNL). There can be no question that Franklin's writings indicate that the term "penny" was certainly in everyday usage prior to the coinage of early American coppers.

On Wednesday evening, May 25th, 1892, Mr. Francis B. Lee of Trenton, N.J. presented a paper before the American Numismatic and Historical Society of New York City entitled "The Colonial Jersey Coinage, from an Historical Standpoint". In this paper Mr. Lee discusses the rates of exchange and the early attention given to this matter:

In West New Jersey attention was very early paid to this matter and under the proceedings of the Commissioners, May 3, 1681, it was ordered by the Court having jurisdiction over the Liberties and Precincts of Burlington, that English coin should pass at the following rates.

1 Shilling, @ 1.6, (other pieces in proportion.)

King's Copper Farthing, @ $\frac{1}{2}$ penny.

$\frac{1}{2}$ pence, @ 1 penny.

Moreover no one was compelled to take above "six pounds of y^e said Copper Coyne in one payment."

In the General Free Assembly held at Burlington, (November 21-28, 1681), the xxvi chapter of a general act provided that an old England shilling should pass at 18 pence and other coin proportionately, whilst an New England shilling was legalized at 14 pence and lesser denominations in a like ratio. This act was made void after May 18th, 1682, by the Assembly of the latter year. Exactly two years after, or in 1684, it was ordered that "three farthings of the King's Coin shall be accounted and go current for one penny within this Province, and so proportionately to greater sums; provided none shall be constrained to take more than five shillings thereof at one payment."

So here we find the use of the term "penny" as far back as the year 1681 in America and used specifically in the context of "Copper Coyne".

ON CONNECTICUT COPPERS STRUCK OVER NEW JERSEY COPPERS

● ● from Edward R. Barnsley

(RF-36A)

In reply to RF-36 (CNL, Sept. 1972, p. 369), although it has been stated in print that Connecticut Coppers were in some cases struck over New Jersey's, my observations have been the other way around; I mean, Connecticut's were the undertypes, not the overtypes. I have never seen or heard of a specific example of a Connecticut over New Jersey striking. Have you?

● ● from ye Editor

(RF-36B)

In a personal letter dated June 7, 1972, the late Cyril H. Hawley wrote the following observation to ye Editor, prior to the publication of RF-36, and in response to a preliminary inquiry on this subject:

"With reference to the Connecticut coppers overstruck on New Jersey coppers, I never owned one but have seen references to them in Crosby and by Miller as you doubtless know. However, I did have some overstruck on Novas. Several years ago I disposed of my collection, and I find myself rather wishing it was back in my cabinets. However, I collected most of my Connecticut's when they could be found in quantities at from \$1.00 to \$1.50 each! At present prices I doubt that my Scotch blood could take the shock of again acquiring the 303 out of 384 varieties listed by Miller."

Ye Editor has searched through both Crosby and Miller for the references that are mentioned here, but they have not been located. Our conclusion is that Mr. Hawley must have been in error, both in the original manuscript "Auctori Connec and the Fugios" and in his later letter quoted above. If any of our Patrons are aware of Connecticut's struck over New Jerseys, please advise us.



AN 11 STAR EXCELSIOR CENT ?

(TN-49)

● ● from T.D.Howe; Houston, Texas

"The Coinages of the World - Ancient and Modern" by Geo D. Mathews, published in 1876 by Scott and Company, on page 193 states:

"In 1786 there appeared the Excelsior cent On the reverse an olive branch in the left talon and arrows in the right; while the head is surrounded by thirteen stars. Another issue of this coin, having a similar obverse but the reverse having eleven stars in place of thirteen surrounding the head, arrows in the left and olive in the right and bearing the date 1787 was issued the next year".

Presumably this second coin is Taxay's "Star before date" (Plate 237) but this plate shows 13 stars - not 11. Does anyone know of a 1786 Excelsior or a 1787 with 11 stars? Or is Mr. Mathews in error ?

CONSTELLATIO NOVA

(TN-46A)

- ● from Kenneth E. Bressett; Racine, Wisconsin

Walter Breen's comments on the NOVA CONSTELLATIO legend are logical and convincing. (CNL, September 1974, p. 453) There is, however, still room to question how the legend was intended to be read.

It is true that proper die orientation indicates the word CONSTELLATIO should appear around the top half of the design. The eyebrow and other points mentioned by Breen establish this to be true, and Guide Book illustrations have always been so oriented.

It is significant, however, that the original rendition of the legend has a stop between NOVA and CONSTELLATIO, and an end decoration (mullet or quarterfoil) that completes the phrase.

The legend is punctuated NOVA . CONSTELLATIO * on all three dies of 1783. The single die of 1785 with this same feature is a mule of the 1783 blunt rays reverse. The subsequent 1785 dies and the 1786 contemporary counterfeit are all without punctuations in the legend.

It is also significant that the 1783 Nova Constellatio silver patterns are unmistakably inscribed to read NOVA CONSTELLATIO, either with the words brought close together or with the decoration separating the beginning from the end.

This method of punctuating a legend is also seen in the plow type coinage of Vermont where the similiar eye and star-burst design is used with the legend STELLA . QUARTA . DECIMA .

One cannot disagree with Breen's reasoning that CONSTELLATIO NOVA should have been the proper rendition, but it would seem that such technicalities must have escaped the early die cutters. In my opinion it is still quite proper to refer to these coins as NOVA CONSTELLATIO coppers.

